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# The Plague of Simple Loss

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# The Plague of Simple Loss

by Robert Parham

A plague of many colors,  
a kind of iridescent soot,  
descended on the land.  
Its damage seemed little  
to those who could not miss  
what it had killed: just  
simple manners, what seemed  
rules of prickly consort  
to uninitiates were in fact  
what eased the passing place  
to place, person to person.

Good manners are but kindness,  
all with sense would know.  
It is not a prison of forks,  
which one first, or where,  
but forks instead of fingers  
greasy with half raw duck,  
clean folded napkins  
in the place of snot-filled rags,  
a pause to let the jest of one  
precede the gentle spar of next.

